

# Art and the Holocaust



Artwork Looted, Relocated or Lost During WWII  
(*Memorial in Budapest*)

# [Rape of Europa](#) Trailer

**Art History...**Studying history through visual images, artifacts and architecture

## [PBS Site](#) Rape of Europa

Hitler, a rejected art student who set out to create his own museum on his own terms.

*Quote from British Monuments Man Ronald Balfour (371)*

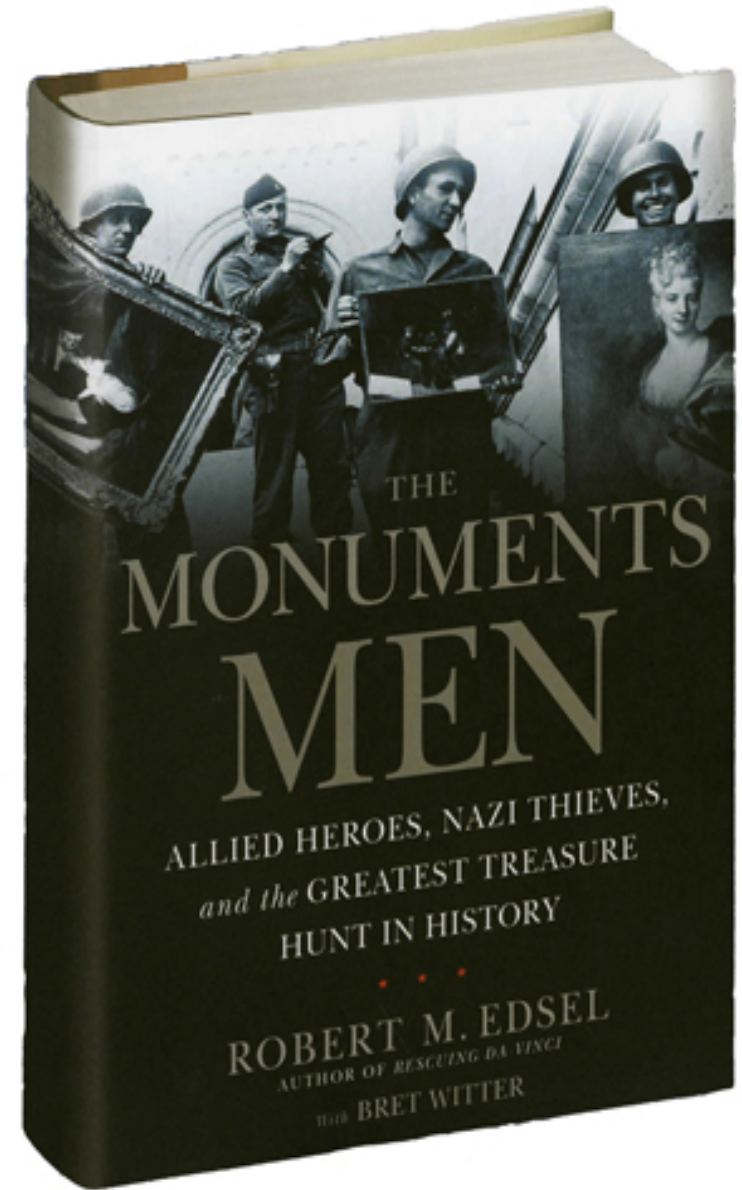
We do not want to destroy unnecessarily what men spent so much time and care and skill in making...[for] these examples of craftsmanship tell us so much about our ancestors...If these things are lost or broken or destroyed, we lose a valuable part of our knowledge about our forefathers. No age lives entirely alone; every civilization is formed not merely by its own achievements but by what it has inherited from the past. If these things are destroyed, we have lost a part of our past, and we shall be the poorer for it.

Adolf Hitler was an art student who did not get an opportunity to follow his passion. Therefore, he made it a goal to develop his own museum. Throughout WWII he sought out artwork from the communities Germany invaded to include in his personal museum, the Führermuseum, in Linz.

Read more: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1719935,00.html#ixzz1NvpV9ihl>

The [\*Monuments Men\*](#) were a division of Allied Soldiers who worked to protect Europe's Monuments and Masterpieces.

*One of the first attempts to acquire art began in 1939 with the blitzkrieg of Poland*



# Kummel Report 1940

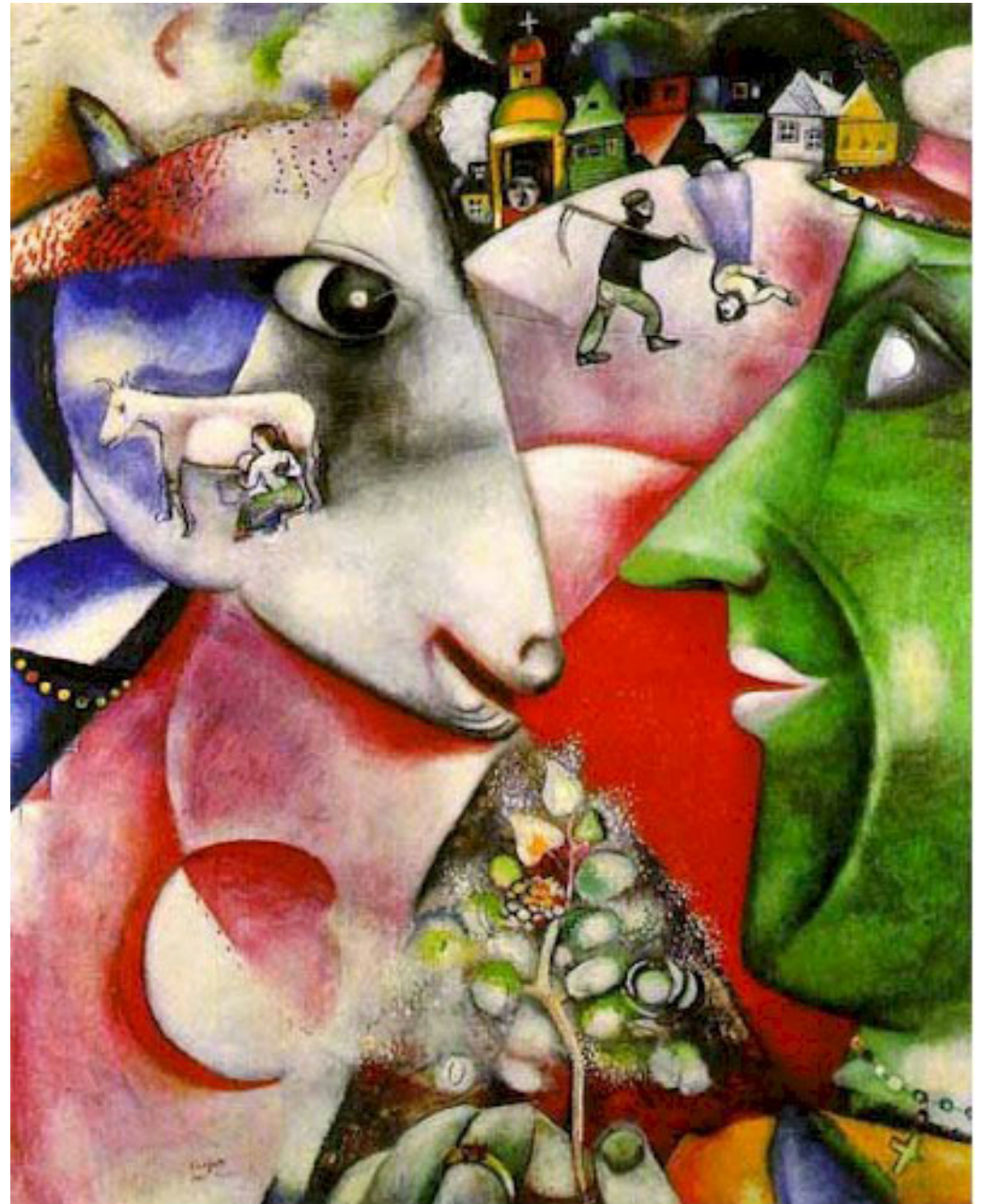
Hitler, through Goebbels his propaganda minister, commissioned an inventory of EVERY work of art in the Western World that rightly belonged to Germany. This included artwork taken from Germany since 1950 and all works of art by German and Austrian artists. (*Monuments Men*)

The GREAT fear of the allies "What if we win the war but lose the last five hundred years of our cultural history" (237). The job of the Monuments Men was to ensure this did not happen.



# Hitler's Concept of "Degenerate Art"

*I and the Village* 1911  
by Marc Chagall (R)  
*Les Femmes d'Alger* 1906 by Pablo Picasso



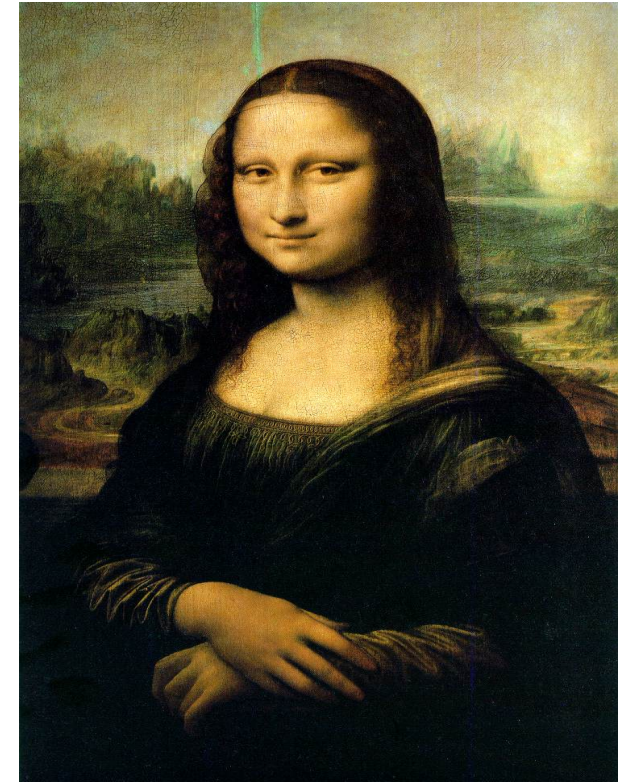
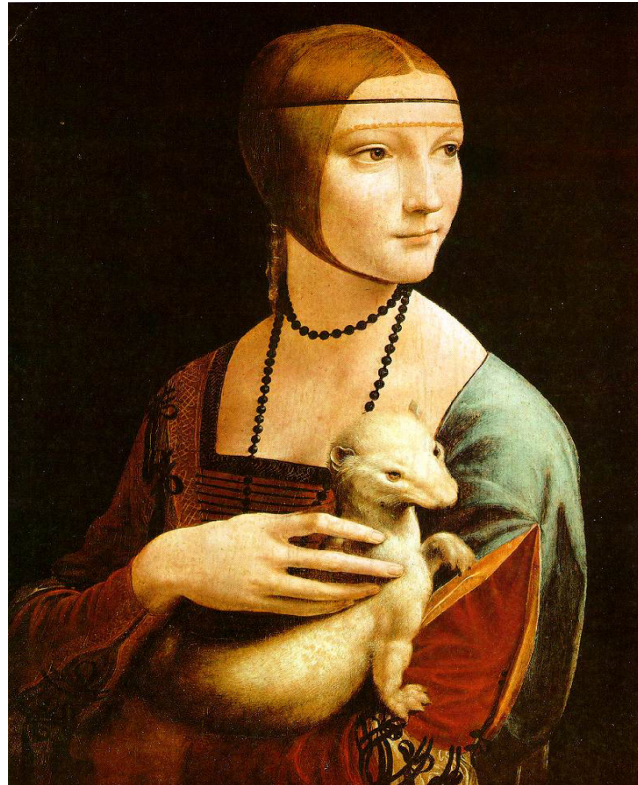




*Lady With an Ermine* by Leonardo da Vinci



# Leonardo's "Ladies"



Ginevra de' Benci 1476-1481 (marriage portrait, NGA)

Lady With an Ermine (Cecilia Gallerani 1484-85)

Mona Lisa 1503-1507





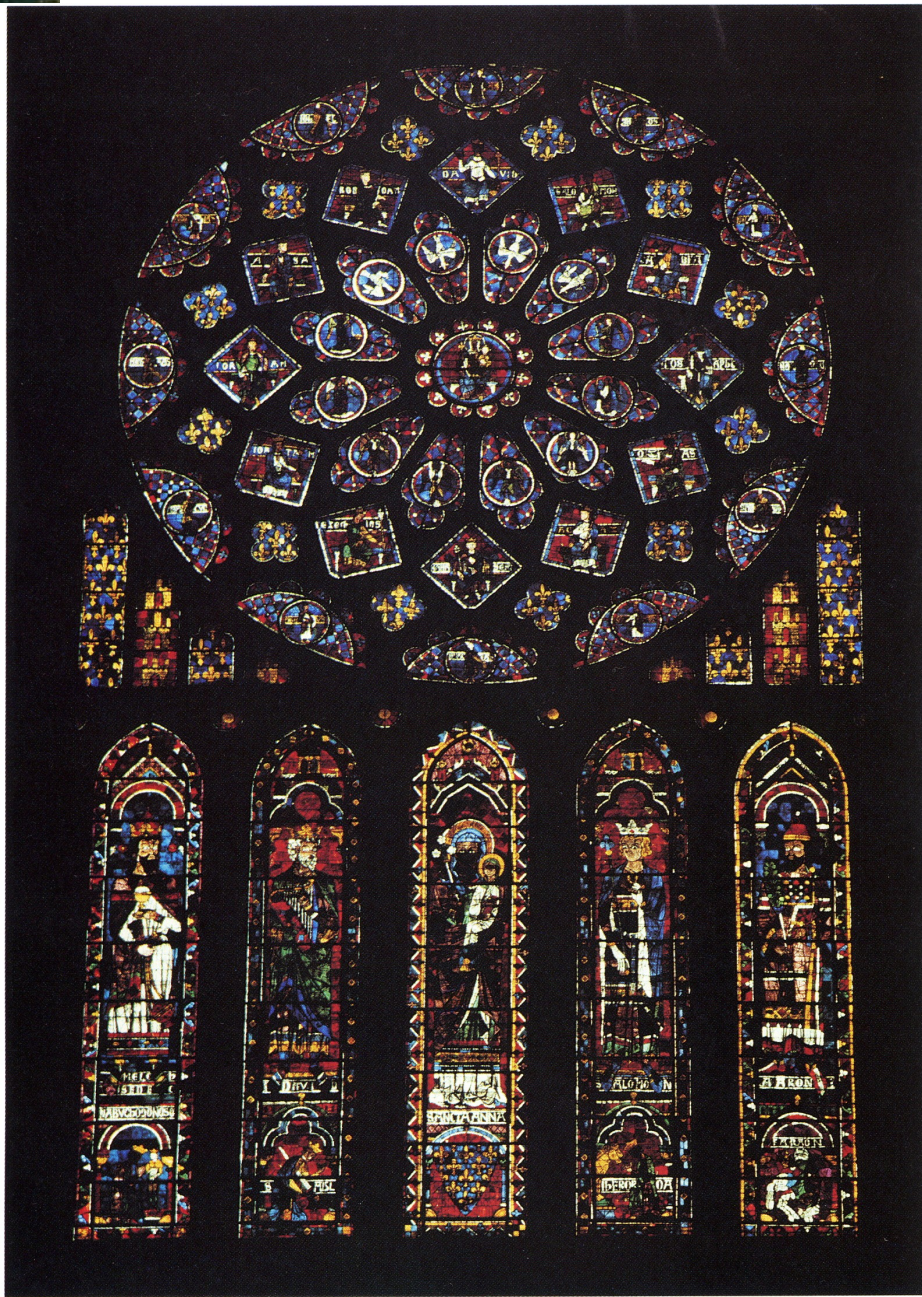
[Viet Stoss Altarpiece](#) ... Polish National Treasure



*Bruges Madonna* by  
Michelangelo taken in 1944  
Only work outside Italy  
(*Pieta* below)







Chartres Cathedral in  
France 1944

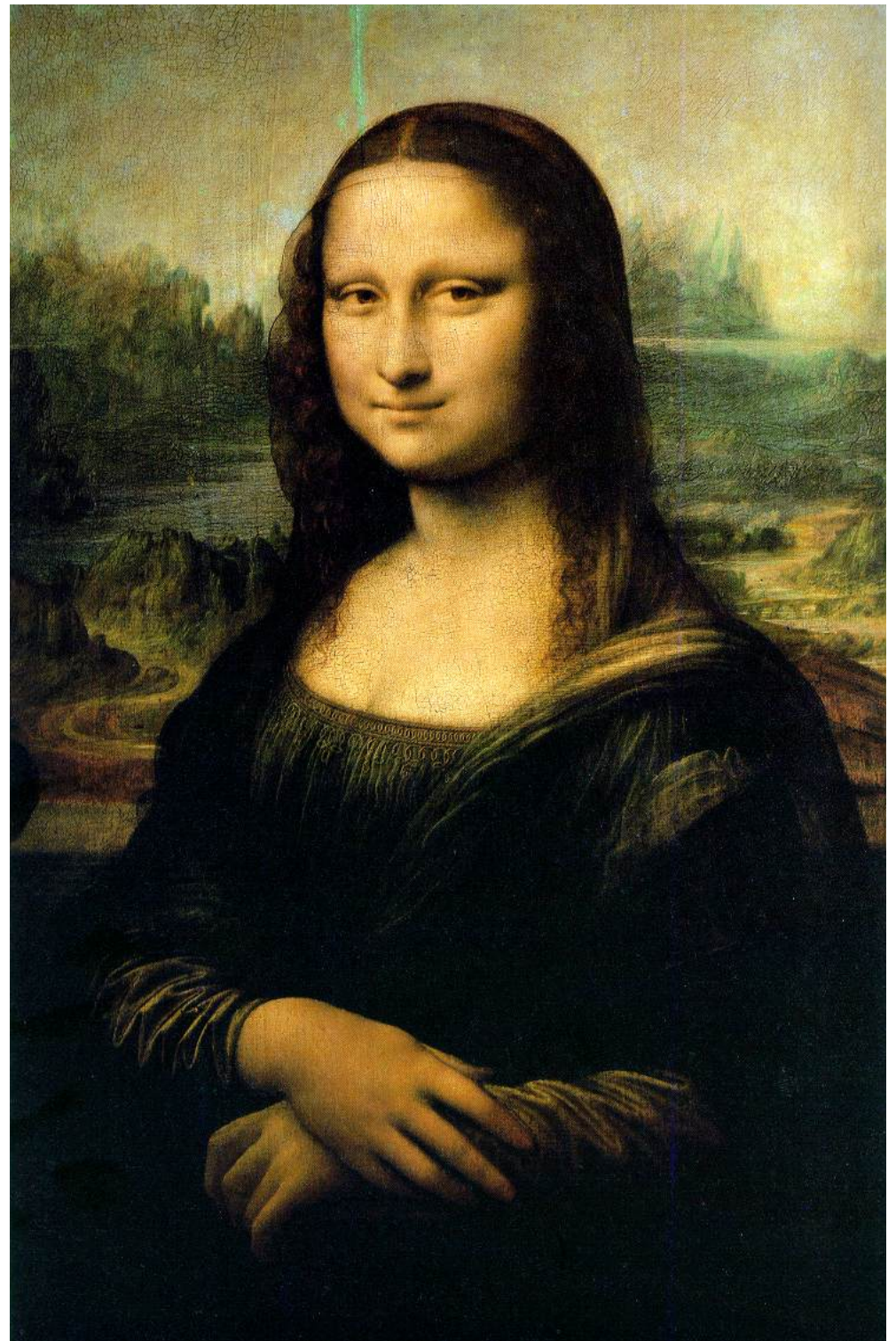




*The Night Watch* by Rembrandt  
rolled and hidden



*Mona Lisa* by  
Leonardo da Vinci  
(hidden)





*Raft of the Medusa* by Géricault (hidden)





Charlemagne's *Palace Church at Aachen*  
Birthplace for First German Reich  
First German city threatened by Allied troops

## *The Astronomer*

by Vermeer stolen  
from Rothschild's  
Paris mansion in  
1940s

*An interesting "logic" of seizure of collections was developed by the Germans. First, art belonging to Jewish collections could be seized and looted.*

*Thus, Vermeer's, The Astronomer, probably the most famous individual piece of looted art, moved from the Rothschild collection to Hitler's personal inventory ([Jewishpost.com](http://Jewishpost.com)).*



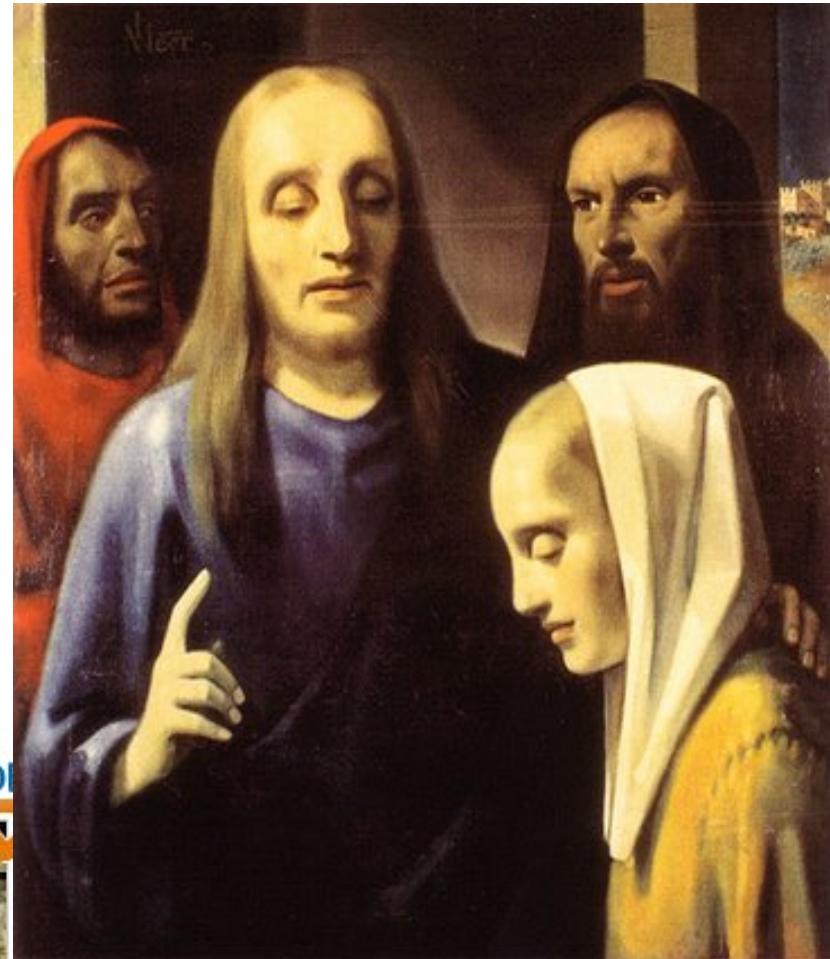
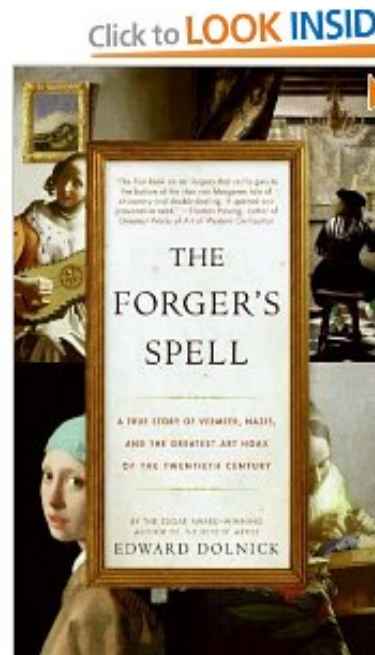


# Capitalize on the Nazi Party's Greed...

Edward Dolnick's book follows how a second-rate artist named **Han van Meegeren** tricked the experts, the dealers, museums, and eventually the Nazi Party plundering Europe's finest treasures into believing his works were by the Master of Delft.

How?

With religious works previously "unseen".



*Christ with the Woman Taken in Adultery "supposed Vermeer"*





*Ghent Altarpiece (aka The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb)* by Jan van Eyck 1432  
*Belgium's most beloved art treasure*



# Quedlinburg Italia Fragment

- Stolen by an American soldier
- Oldest surviving illustrated biblical manuscript



Restitution  
Return  
Reunite





*Landscape With Cottage and Figures*  
by Dutch artist Pieter Molijn



## 2010 News Article:

The Getty Museum in Los Angeles will return a 17th-century Dutch painting looted by the Nazis to the heir of the Jewish art dealer.

Jewish art dealer Jacques Goudstikker left 1,400 works of art in his Amsterdam gallery when he fled the Nazis in 1940. He died during the escape. His gallery was looted by Hermann Goering shortly afterward. In 2006, the Dutch government returned 202 paintings from its national collection to Goudstikker's sole heir, Marei von Saher.

In returning the painting "Landscape With Cottage and Figures" by Dutch artist Pieter Molijn, the Getty Museum becomes the first American institution to offer restitution to von Saher, who is the widow of Goudstikker's son.

The painting never went on display at the museum, which purchased the painting at an auction in 1972 for an undisclosed amount, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Four other museums in the United States and Canada have been identified as holding Goudstikker paintings, according to the newspaper.



**Q:** How did the Nazi Party Get Away With It?

**A:** Establishing the ERR (Reich Leader Rosenberg's Special Task Force) and authorizing it to "search lodges, libraries and archives in the occupied territories of the west for material valuable to Germany, and to safeguard the latter through the Gestapo" (177).

Rose Valland,  
French art  
historian and  
curator of  
Louvre during  
WWII and the  
Jeu de Paume





# Rose Valland, a member of the French Resistance.

- Knew German and secretly took notes on shipments
- Protected artwork
- Helped in the rescue
- Nazi Party ordered her to catalog the collection of looted art stored in the Jeu de Paume

Valland's heroic work to save the train full of French masterpieces—as described in her memoirs, *Sur le front de l'art*—inspired a movie called [The Train](#) (1964).

[Train IMDB](#)



# Rape of Europa

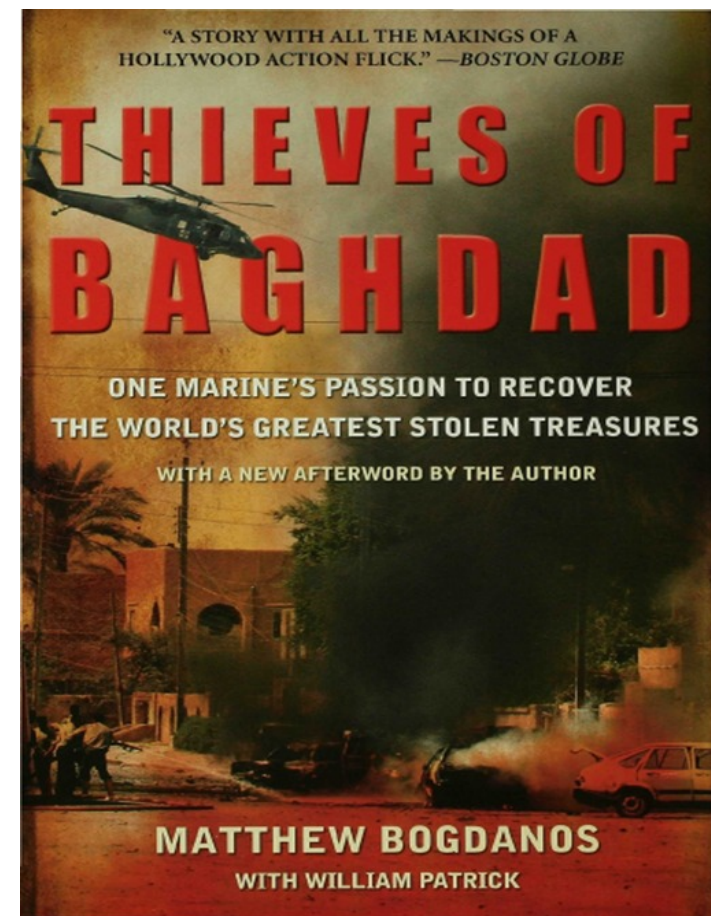
"...age old argument...what is more valuable a work of art or a human life?"





# Legacy of the Monuments Men

Matthew Bogdanos, a  
United States Marine



# Looted Art...WHY? It was not considered "the public's art".

Saddam Hussein's Birthday Celebrations held there. Entrance by invitation only.

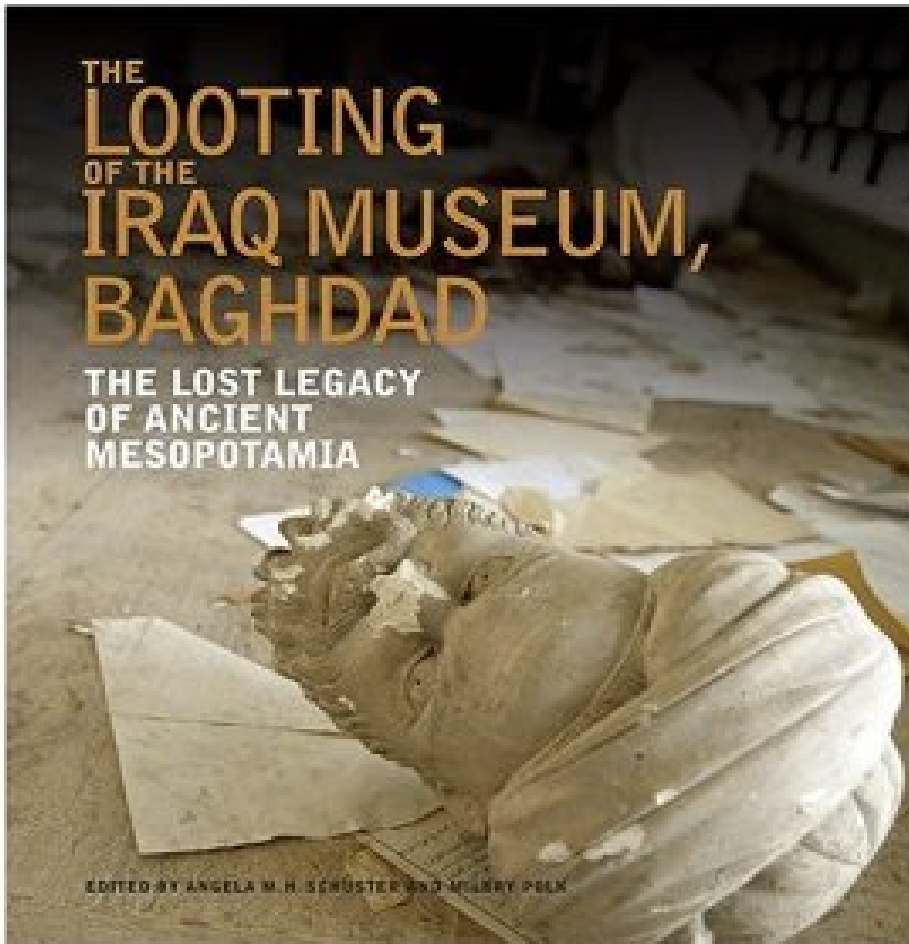


*As Gordon Newby, a historian and Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at Emory University in Atlanta said, what happened in the museum [“is just one of the most tragic things that could happen for our being able to understand the past.”](#)*



# Tel Asmar Votive Figures

"Cradle of Civilization"  
Human History



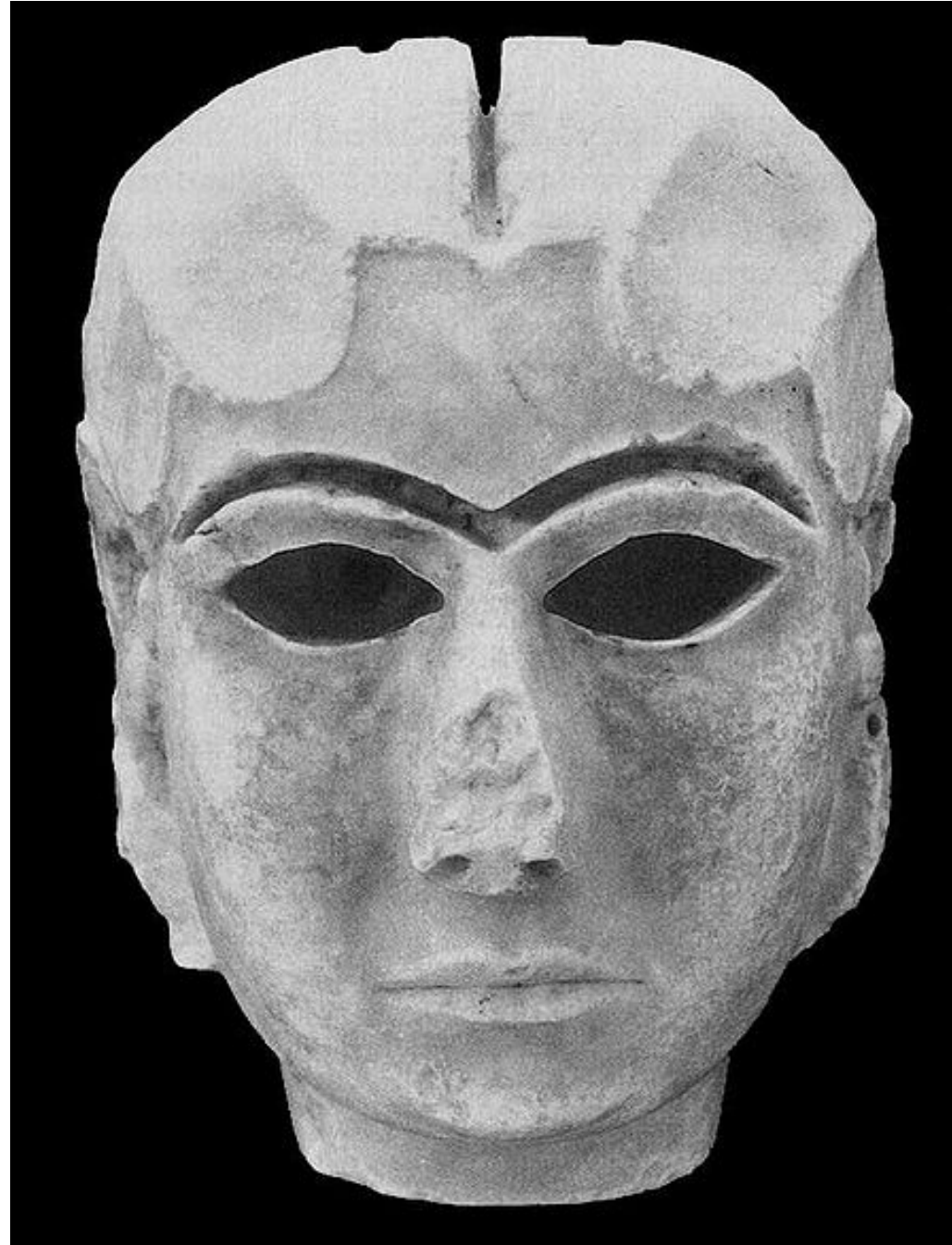
[Returned 2008](#) by Syrian  
authorities

# Female Mask of Warka (Uruk)

More than 13,500 items were stolen from the National Museum of Iraq during the fall of Baghdad in the early 2000s.

The missing items were lifted by discriminating professional thieves who passed over copies and less valuable items.

The stolen items are speculated to be traded for weapons.





# Harp of Ur

Scenes from Epic of Gilgamesh



# Sacred Vase of Warka

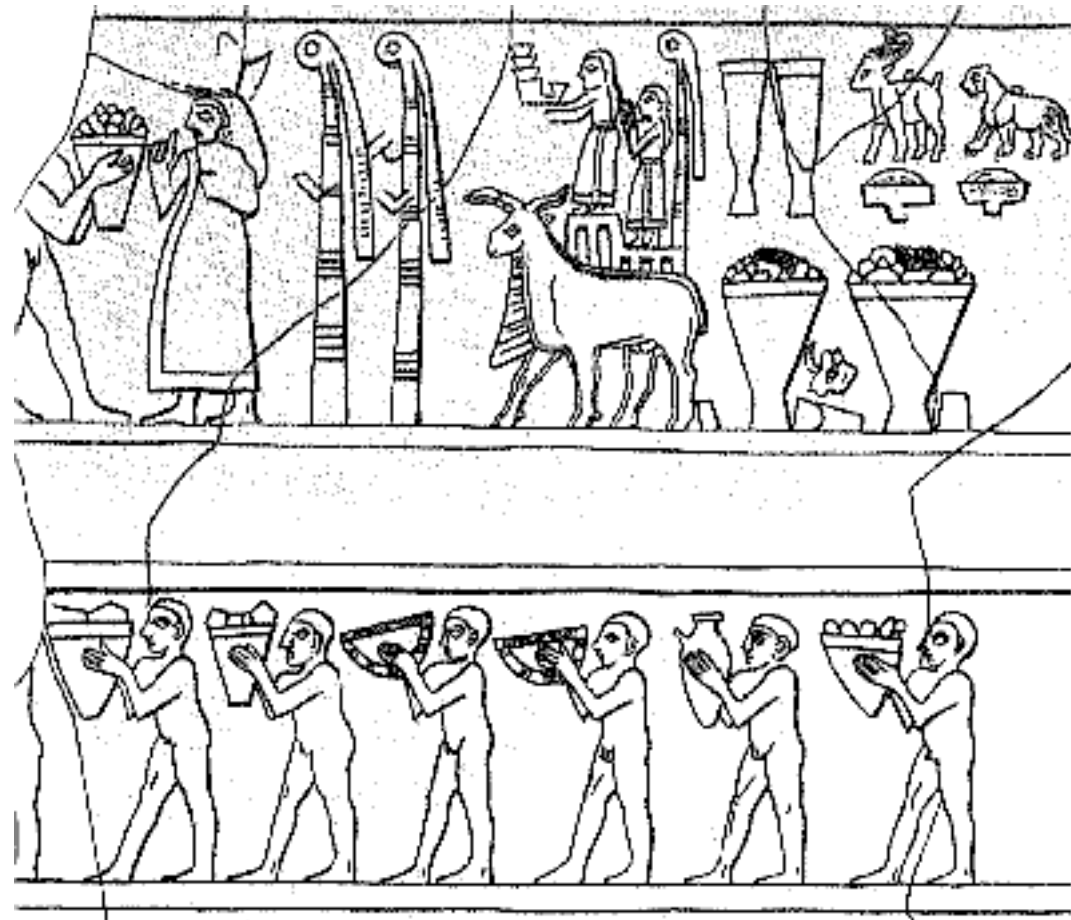
[Returned 2003](#)

Made of Limestone

World's oldest carved-stone ritual vessel

Narrative - Goddess Inanna

18 Pieces





# Cylinder Seals

## Treasury of Nimrud

